

REMARKS

Claims 32-39 have been added. Claims 23-31 have been canceled without prejudice.

The Examiner has rejected applicant's claims 23-27 under 35 USC § 112, second paragraph, as failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim applicant's invention. Additionally, claims 23-27 and 31 have been rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as unpatentable based on the Crawford patent (US Patent No. 5,901,228) taken in view of the Dedrick patent (US Patent No. 6,016,509). Claims 23-27 and 31 have been deleted, thereby rendering these rejections moot. To the extent the Examiner believes the rejection based on the Crawford and Dedrick patents applies to newly added claims 32-39, it is respectfully traversed

Applicant's new independent claim 32 recites a document accumulation apparatus, comprising: creation means for creating a memory box corresponding to a predetermined storage area in a memory in accordance with external operation; acquisition means for acquiring a document; accumulation means for accumulating the document in the memory box; print means for executing print processing of the document accumulated in the memory box; transfer means for transferring the document accumulated in the memory box to an external apparatus via a communication line; and wherein status of use indicating that the document has been processed by said accumulation means, print means or transfer means is accumulated in the memory box together with the document by said accumulation means, transmission means for transmitting the status of use accumulated in the memory box to a billing management apparatus via the communication line. Independent method claim 38 recites like features.

In applicant's claimed invention, a memory box is created corresponding to a predetermined storage area in a memory. An acquired document is accumulated in the memory box. The accumulated document is print processed and transferred to an external apparatus via

a communication line. Status of use indicating that the document has been accumulated, print processed or transferred is then accumulated in the memory box along with the document. The accumulated status of use is then transmitted to a billing management system via the communication line. Such a construction is not taught or suggested by the cited art of record.

In particular, the Examiner points to the Crawford patent and argues that the patent discloses "memory box creating means (col. 29, L57-67) . . . accumulation means for accumulating the document in the memory box (col. 29 L 57-67, 'software needed to satisfy the request') . . . recording means for recording upon reception of the document in association with the memory box at least one of: file size, time . . . (col. 30 L 19-24) . . . transmission means for transmitting the recorded status information to said billing management apparatus (host computer 104 receives the status information for billing col. 45 L 25-27)" It is evident, however, that the Crawford patent does not mention the creation of a specific memory box corresponding to a predetermined storage area in a memory. Moreover, while the patent mentions that the host computer logs information (e.g. user, begin time, the end time, etc.) and "allocates ('mounts') the appropriate virtual disks containing the software needed to satisfy the requests", there is no teaching or suggestion that the logged information and the software are both accumulated in such a created specific memory box corresponding to a predetermined storage area.

In contrast, applicant's amended claims require the creation of such a memory box and further that the status of use indicating that a document accumulated in the memory box has been accumulated, print processed or transferred is accumulated in the memory box along with the document. Applicant's independent claims 32 and 38, and their respective dependent claims, all of which recite such features thus patentably distinguish over the Crawford patent.

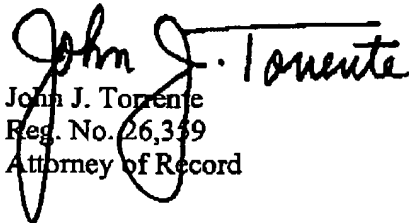
The Dedrick patent fails to add anything to the Crawford patent to change this conclusion.

In view of the above, it is submitted that applicant's claims, as amended, patentably distinguish over the cited art of record. Accordingly, reconsideration of the claims is respectfully requested.

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Respectfully submitted,

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